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PRESS RELEASE
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NH DHHS Announces First Presumptive Positive Test Result for Person in NH tested for COVID-19

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) announces the first presumptive positive test result in New Hampshire for COVID-19, the disease caused by the new 2019 coronavirus. This individual is an adult male from Grafton County and is currently isolated at home with mild symptoms. DHHS conducted testing today on the individual after they returned from travel to Italy and notified their healthcare provider after developing fever and respiratory symptoms within 14 days of travel.

“This morning, we identified the first presumptive positive test result for COVID-19 in New Hampshire. This positive test is in an individual who traveled to Italy and developed symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within several days of travel. At this time, there is no evidence of more widespread community transmission in New Hampshire,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Benjamin Chan. “The State is conducting an investigation to determine potential exposure to other people in order to quickly isolate and test any additional people with suspect coronavirus.”

The NH Public Health Laboratories (PHL) conducted the test and identified the presumptive positive result. The patient’s specimen is being sent to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention today for confirmatory testing. The CDC is conducting confirmatory tests on all state laboratory tests that are found to be presumptively positive for COVID-19.

DHHS has started a contact investigation and is reaching out to individuals who may have been in direct contact with the individual. Public health professionals will monitor any close contacts and ask them to self-quarantine for 14 days following their last exposure to monitor for potential symptoms of the virus. Household contacts of the person who has presumptively tested positive have been self-quarantining at home since the state and healthcare providers determined that the individual met the criteria to be evaluated for COVID-19.

The U.S. expects to detect more introductions of COVID-19 through travel, as well as more person-to-person spread and community transmission of this virus. The CDC and New Hampshire are conducting aggressive containment efforts, including ongoing use of isolation and quarantine measures to decrease introductions and spread of the virus.

Because COVID-19, and all respiratory illnesses, are most commonly spread through respiratory droplets, residents should take the same precautions as those recommended to prevent the spread of influenza:

- Stay home and avoid public places when sick (i.e. social distancing)
- Cover mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing
- Wash hands frequently
- Avoid being within 6 feet (close contact) of a person who is sick
- Avoid sharing drinks, smoking/vaping devices, or other utensils or objects that may transmit saliva
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces

There is sustained and widespread transmission of COVID-19 in several countries. The CDC has currently issued travel advisories for the following countries, but given the rapidly changing situation, these advisories are frequently changing:

- Level 3 Travel Warning (avoid all nonessential travel due to widespread community transmission): China, Iran, Italy and South Korea
- Level 2 Travel Alert (practice enhanced precautions due to sustained community transmission): Japan
- Level 1 Travel Watch (practice usual precautions but limited community spread has been reported): Hong Kong

For more information on COVID-19 in NH, please visit

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/2019-ncov.htm>. For the latest information from the CDC, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

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